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Czechoslovakia: The Dubcek regime may soon begin to give a more nationalist turn to the country's foreign policy.

[redacted] previously expected that the government would wait about a year before striking out on new foreign policy paths, now believe that it will embark on a more flexible course in the next few months. The regime's preoccupation with domestic problems, however, and its dependence on the USSR for raw materials, markets, and defense will limit its foreign options.

Certain small shifts in Czechoslovakia's attitudes toward its Communist neighbors and the West already have become evident. For example, the failure of the Czechoslovak delegation at the recent conference of Communist parties in Budapest fully to endorse the Soviet position was, [redacted] a studied effort to preserve room for future maneuver.

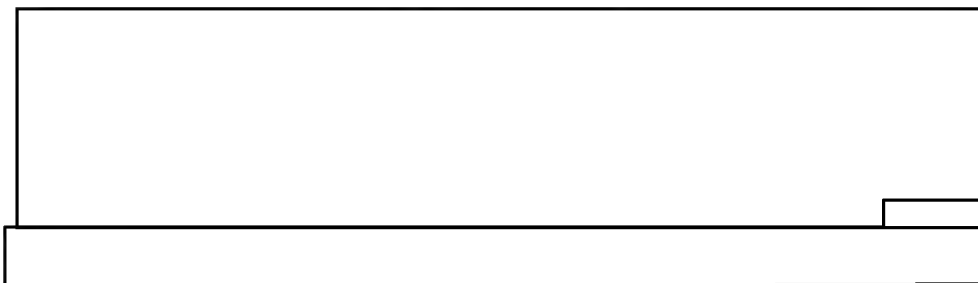
[redacted] only the strong urgings of the Poles, East Germans, and Russians brought the Czechoslovaks to support the Russian call for an international Communist meeting later this year.

In a recent example of thawing toward the West, the Czechoslovaks have made known that they now regard cooperation with such bodies as the UN Economic Commission for Europe as essential. They believe, however, that they cannot afford politically to move too rapidly toward better relations with individual Western states, especially the US. [redacted]

*Panama: The political impasse continues with no major confrontation likely until Monday.

The National Assembly met briefly yesterday morning to receive the investigating commission's findings confirming impeachment charges against President Robles for violation of the constitution. In a session boycotted by government deputies, the legislators reportedly agreed to reconvene Monday afternoon, when they are expected to set a date--no sooner than three days from then--to hear the commission's report and vote on whether to uphold the charges.

The assembly president rejected a government-inspired court injunction of 7 March which ordered immediate suspension of impeachment proceedings.



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NOTES

Poland: Turbulent student demonstrations in Warsaw yesterday in support of dissident writers will add to the government's problems in dealing with the rising ferment among intellectuals. According to Western press accounts, a strong force of club-swinging police was needed to disperse some 4,000-5,000 Warsaw University students calling for "freedom and constitution." Another group of 300 tried to march on the party's central committee building. The handling of the demonstrations will sharpen the confrontation between the government and the intellectuals, which is contributing to factionalism within the party.

[REDACTED]

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Warsaw Pact: Members of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee were unable to reach agreement on the draft nonproliferation treaty at the summit meeting on 6-7 March in Sofia. Six signed a statement supporting a draft treaty, but Rumania held out. The final communique noted only that each delegation expressed its position on the draft treaty. This marks the first time a communique of this committee has publicized a failure to reach unanimous agreement, and is evidence of the dwindling effectiveness of the pact as a political unifying instrument. All participants, however, joined in denouncing US policy in Vietnam and reaffirming support of the Vietnamese Communists.

[REDACTED]

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